

Below you will find an editorial that appeared in today's New York Times. If the Liberal New York Times is printing editorials on wasteful Congressional pork projects, a clear message is being sent to Murtha and other Democrats to clean up the earmark process and pursue real reform. January 14, ... *Below you will find an editorial that appeared in today's New York Times. If the Liberal New York Times is printing editorials on wasteful Congressional pork projects, a clear message is being sent to Murtha and other Democrats to clean up the earmark process and pursue real reform.*

January 14, 2008 -- New York Times Editorial

### The Pork King Keeps His Crown

The new earmark disclosure rules put into effect by Congress confirm the pre-eminence of Representative John Murtha at procuring eye-popping chunks of pork for contractors he helped put in business in Johnstown, Pa. The Pennsylvania Democrat, a power player on defense appropriations, exudes pride, not embarrassment, for delivering hundreds of millions of dollars in largesse to district beneficiaries. They, in turn, requite with hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign donations.

Mr. Murtha led all House members this year, securing \$162 million in district favors, according to the watchdog group Taxpayers for Common Sense. In all, eager members in both houses enacted 11,144 earmarks, worth \$15 billion. Taxpayers may be inured to \$113,000 for rodent control in Alaska or a million for Idaho's weed management. Mr. Murtha's universe is a far more complicated and costly creation of interlocking contractors who continue to feed at the public trough despite reviews questioning their performance.

In 1991, Mr. Murtha used a \$5 million earmark to create the National Defense Center for Environmental Excellence in Johnstown to develop anti-pollution technology for the military. Since then, it has garnered more than \$670 million in contracts and earmarks. Meanwhile it is managed by another contractor Mr. Murtha helped create, Concurrent Technologies, a research operation that somehow was allowed to be set up as a tax-exempt charity, according to The Washington Post. Thanks to Mr. Murtha, Concurrent has boomed; the annual salary for its top three executives averages \$462,000.

There's been no report of Mr. Murtha's profiting personally. "This is about jobs," the congressman insists. But the Murtha operation — which has become a model for other entrepreneurial lawmakers — is a gross example of quid pro quo Washington. Every one of the

26 beneficiaries of Mr. Murtha's earmarks in last year's defense budget made contributions to his campaign kitty, a total of \$413,250, according to the newspaper Roll Call. The Pentagon, seeking its own goodies before Mr. Murtha's committee, is noticeably hesitant to challenge his projects. And we're not hearing a lot of objections from his colleagues — not after members have ladled out a fresh \$15 billion for their own special interests, just in time for the coming elections.